



The Impact of Menthol and Flavored Tobacco on Youth

The human and economic costs of tobacco in Philadelphia is devastating

- In Philadelphia, tobacco kills more than 3,500 city residents each year, more than overdoses, gun homicides, alcohol, and physical inactivity combined.¹
- The average smoker loses 10 years of life expectancy due to tobacco use.²
- This burden is disproportionately borne by minority and low-income city residents.³
 - 26% of African-Americans in Philadelphia smoke vs 21% of whites.
 - 32% of Philadelphians with incomes below the poverty line smoke vs. 20% of non-poor city residents.
- The medical costs alone to treat illnesses caused by smoking in Philadelphia are over \$840 million.⁴ Even nonsmokers pay for these costs, through health insurance premiums or taxes for Medicare and Medicaid.
- 28% of Philadelphia's youth used some form of tobacco cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, or electronic vapor products in 2015.⁵

Tobacco flavorings put our youth at risk for initiating and continuing smoking.

- 90% of smokers start by age 18.⁶
- In 2014, 70% of teenagers who used tobacco reported using a flavored product within the past 30 days.⁷
- Cheap candy, fruit, and menthol flavored cigarillos are often packaged and sold in kid-friendly flavors and placed next to kid-orientated products that entice kids to start smoking
- While cigarette use declined from 9.6 % to 7.5%, Cigar use more than doubled among black youth from 2011 to 2013. From 2013 to 2015, the increase in cigar use was statistically significant⁸
- Menthol minimizes the harshness of smoke while increasing the likelihood of addiction.⁹
- Teens who start smoking with menthol products are twice as likely to become daily lifetime smokers.¹⁰



The tobacco industry relies on predatory marketing strategies in communities of color

- Menthol cigarette advertisements have exploited cultural traditions in African-American communities, including Black History Month, the Black Power movement, and hip-hop culture.
- A 2013 study showed that stores in majority black neighborhoods in Philadelphia were 74% more likely to have tobacco ads near children's products.¹¹
- Nationally, billboard ads in black neighborhoods are more likely than those in white neighborhoods to show menthol brands¹²
- Cigarette ads in *Ebony* are 10 times as likely to be for menthol than ads in *People*¹³
- Blacks teens reported more menthol cigarette use (71%) than non-Hispanic whites (51%) and Hispanics (52%)¹⁴
- 85% of black smokers but only 29% of white smokers smoke menthol cigarettes¹⁵



Support for a restriction on the sale of flavored tobacco is widespread, and several major cities have already taken action.

- New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Providence all have restrictions on the sale of flavored tobacco products. Chicago's restrictions include a ban on menthol within 500 feet of high schools
- In 2011, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) concluded that the removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace "would benefit public health in the United States."¹⁶
- NAACP delegates adopted a resolution supporting efforts at the state and local levels to restrict the sale of menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products, specifically citing Big Tobacco's well-documented history of targeting African-American communities.¹⁷



References

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³ Public Health Management Corporation Community Health Data Base's (2014/2015) Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey

⁴ Assuming Philadelphia's costs are proportional to national costs. Xu X et al. Annual healthcare spending attributable to cigarette smoking: an update. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;48:326-33.

⁵ CDC. 2015 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=PH>. Accessed on April 07, 2017.

⁶ CDC. Youth and Tobacco Use Fact Sheet. April 14, 2016. Available at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/. Accessed on April 07, 2017.

⁷ Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — the United States, 2014 *MMWR* October 2, 2015 / 64(38);1066-1070. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6438a2.htm>.

⁸ Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Use of Tobacco by Youth in Philadelphia. *CHART* 2017;2(5):1-4.

⁹ FDA. Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee's Report and Recommendations on the Impact of the Use of Menthol in Cigarettes on the Public Health. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/AdvisoryCommittees/CommitteesMeetingMaterials/TobaccoProductsScientificAdvisoryCommittee/ucm247605.htm>.

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¹¹ Hillier A, Chilton M, Zhao Q, Szymkowiak D, Coffman R, Mallya G. Concentration of Tobacco Advertisements at SNAP and WIC Stores, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2012. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2015;12:140133.

¹² Rising J, Alexander L. Marketing of Menthol Cigarettes and Consumer Perceptions. *Tob Induc Dis*. 2011; 9(Suppl 1): S2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2014 *MMWR* October 2, 2015 / 64(38);1066-1070

¹⁵ Villanti AC et al. Changes in the Prevalence and Correlates of menthol cigarette use in the USA, 2004-2014. *Tob Control* 2016;25:ii14-ii20

¹⁶ Food and Drug Administration, Preliminary Scientific Evaluation of Public Health Effects of Menthol versus Nonmenthol Cigarettes 2013. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ScienceResearch/SpecialTopics/PeerReviewofScientificInformationandAssessments/UCM361598.pdf>

¹⁷ Tavernise S., NY Times 9/13/2016. Black Health Experts Renew Fight Against Menthol Cigarettes. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/health/menthol-cigarettes-fda.html>.